

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: January 9, 2014

Agenda Item: CSKT Lake Trout Slot Limit Removal on Flathead Lake

Division: Fisheries

Action Needed: Final Action

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 Minutes

Background

Since 1992 the following length-based fishing regulations have restricted lake trout harvest on Flathead Lake: 1) a slot limit that prohibits harvest of lake trout in the length range 30 to 36 inches; and 2) a daily harvest limit of one lake trout over 36 inches in length. The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes recently approved a change to fishing regulations on the Flathead Indian Reservation portion of Flathead Lake (south half of lake), which removed the lake trout length-based regulations. This change leaves in place the daily harvest limit of 100 lake trout. The Flathead Reservation Joint Fish and Wildlife Board recommends that the Commission accept this change in FWP fishing regulations for lake trout, as approved by the CSKT Tribal Council.

Public Involvement Process & Results

At the Aug. 21 meeting of the Flathead Reservation Joint Fish and Wildlife Board, the CSKT raised the issue of removing the slot limit and length limit for lake trout. On Sept. 12 the CSKT published notice of the proposed change in the Char-Koosta News newspaper. On Oct. 9, the CSKT held a public meeting in Pablo regarding removal of the slot limit. On Dec. 12, the board recommended forwarding the regulation proposals to the F&W Commission for final action.

Alternatives and Analysis

- 1) F&W Commission accepts the Flathead Reservation Fish and Wildlife Board's recommendation to remove the length-based fishing regulations for lake trout on the Flathead Indian Reservation portion of Flathead Lake, to go into effect on March 1, 2014. The remaining regulation would limit lake trout harvest to 100 daily and in possession. The CSKT fisheries management staff discussed effects of the slot limit on the lake trout population in their draft EIS: *Proposed Strategies to Benefit Native Species by Reducing the Abundance of Lake Trout in Flathead Lake*.
- 2) F&W Commission does not accept the board's recommendation. Such a decision would trigger a dispute resolution process, which is described under the Cooperative Agreement.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends that the Commission accept the board's recommendation to remove the length-based fishing regulations for lake trout on the Flathead Indian Reservation portion of Flathead Lake. FWP recognizes the CSKT Tribal Council's authority to change fishing regulations on Flathead Lake within the boundaries of the Flathead Indian Reservation.

Proposed Motion

I move that the Commission adopt the Flathead Reservation Fish and Wildlife Board's recommendation to remove the lake trout slot limit and the harvest limit of one lake trout over 36 inches daily for the Flathead Indian Reservation portion of Flathead Lake, to go into effect on March 1, 2014.